

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 18, 2011

The Honorable William M. Daley
Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Daley,


We are writing to request that the administration remains committed to regional groundfishery management plans and work to rebuild New England's historic industry and avoid short-term responses that would merely postpone inevitable decisions.

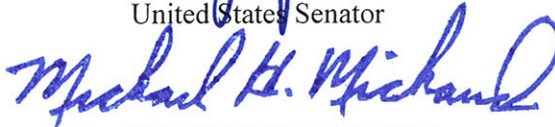
We are painfully aware of the challenges facing the New England fishery and have worked with the rest of the New England delegation to build an efficient and sustainable industry. In fact, the US-Canada Transboundary stock sharing agreement that has enabled a bilateral management body to recommend increased quotas for the Georges Bank yellowtail flounder, demonstrates that our management practices can be dramatically improved upon through common-sense modifications.

Clearly, we can build on this effort through additional resources for cooperative research, more frequent stock assessments, gear research, observer coverage or electronic monitoring equipment, and other activities that will assist fisheries managers reduce by-catch and develop accurate quotas for targeted species. Funding these programs would help facilitate the development of a cooperative relationship between New England fishermen and NOAA. Finally, in a regionally managed fishery, any assistance, whether through programmatic funding or emergency funds or a buy back of vessels and permits, must be distributed equitably across the fishery. Due to the seriousness of the issue and the importance of our fisheries to Maine's coastal economy, we respectfully request a briefing prior to any announcement the Administration makes regarding the New England groundfishery, including any proposed modification of the current geographical distribution of Members of the New England Fisheries Management Council.

We look forward to working with you and your administration to ensure the health and sustainability of our coastal fishing communities and thank you in advance for addressing a regional fishery with input from all affected states.

Sincerely,


OLYMPIA J. SNOWE
United States Senator


MICHAEL H. MICHAUD
Member of Congress


SUSAN M. COLLINS
United States Senator


CHELLIE PINGREE
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Gary Locke, Secretary of Commerce
The Honorable Jane Lubchenco, Administrator of NOAA
The Honorable Eric Schwaab, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries